Increase in consumer price index despite fall in inflation rate

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, at the outset, I strongly deplore the Government's announcement of hiking the fuel price. I urge upon the Government to rollback the hike which has been announced. I also strongly deplore the manner in which it has been done. Just on the eve of the Budget Session of Parliament, this Government has gone ahead with this measure. It is a mockery of Parliamentary democracy. It is shame on the Parliamentary system which we are following.

Having said that, I must also point out that price hike, at this point of time, will have a cascading affect on overall price situation. Despite widespread opposition, the Congress led UPA Government has been permitting the corporate and big business houses to purchase, in bulk quantities, foodgrains, oil, etc., leading to high prices.

Sir, inflation is reported to have become negative *i.e.*, -1.6 per cent for the week ending 6th June, 2009. However, the common man has to pay more for his daily vegetables by 10 per cent, pulses have become dearer by 17 per cent, cereals have become dearer by 13.5 per cent, the fruits and consumer items, including milk, have gone up. The ***Aam Aadmi,*** for whom this Government claims to have commitment, is interested in the CPI which measures the price he has to pay, not in the WPI which measures inflation. That is why we strongly feel that the hike in the prices of petrol and diesel is totally unwarranted at this point of time *i.e.*, just on the eve of the Budget. Let the Budget be presented. Let the Budget be discussed. Let all the economy-related issues be discussed. Why is this Government in tearing hurry? *...(Interruptions)...* That is what we are asking. They are simply saying that there is an increase in the price of crude oil in the international market. But, the Government will have to take into account all the other issues. When the Left Parties were supporting the previous Government, we had given many suggestions. We had also suggested how the duty structure could be restructured apart from other constructive suggestions to the Government. So, we strongly deplore the price hike which has been made by the Government and urge upon the Government to rollback the price hike which it has resorted to. We would like to have the responsefrom the Government. I also think all the parties are agitated. I don't think that even the Treasury Benches are happy with the price hike. They are also agitated. That is why we would like to have response from the Government. Sir, Mr. Prithviraj Chavanji is sitting here. Let him respond on behalf of the Government. Many hon. Members have demanded his response. Let the Government respond to the issue. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Raja.

Now, we are taking up the Calling Attention*...(Interruptions)...*

DR. K. MALAISAMY (Tamil Nadu): Sir, what about the notice that I have given with regard to assault by a Member of Parliament on bank Manager?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Your notice has not been admitted by the hon. Chairman. I have permitted to raise the issues admitted by the hon. Chairman.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has anything to say on the price rise, because the House is very keen to know. Since the hon. Minister is sitting here, we would like to have his reaction. We would like to know whether the Government will consider whatever we have expressed here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we are taking up the Calling Attention motion.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, let us know whether the Minister wants to respond. He is ready to respond to the issue...*(Interruptions)*... He wanted to say what the Government is doing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have no objection if he responds.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, it is a matter of concern for me, for you, for the entire House and for the people in the entire country. Let the hon. Minister say what the Government is thinking on this.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): Sir, we have said that we will give ample opportunity to discuss the whole issue when we take up the discussion on the Budget and let hon. Members raise whatever they want to raise. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This matter is over. ...*(Interruptions)*... The matter is over. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, we are taking up the Calling Attention. Hon. Members have already been informed through Parliament Bulletin, Part-II that the Calling Attention has to be concluded within one hour. The Members who initiate the Calling Attention should not take more than seven minutes and other Members who seek clarification should not speak for more than five minutes. I would again like to emphasise that there should not be speeches, there should only be clarifications on the statement made by the Minister. I hope the Members, participating in the discussion, will scrupulously observe the time limit. Mr. Mysura Reddy, please call the attention of the Minister.

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CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of growing number of Swine Flue cases in the country

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I would like to call the attention of the Minister regarding the spread of Swine Flu in the country.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): Sir, I would like to brief the hon. House on the spread of H1N1 virus in the country and the Government's preparedness to deal with the situation in the backdrop of the present global scenario.